

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated May 18, 2005. Claims 9-11 and 13-14 are pending.

In view of claim changes in this case, and the current claims, the inventorship has been amended herein to delete Mr. Murai from the list of inventors. In other words, the invention of Mr. Murai is no longer being claimed in this non-provisional application.

Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Yoritomi in view of Tsujimura (US 6,556,271) and Tagusa. This Section 103(a) rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Tsujimura is not prior art. In particular, applicants invented the instant invention well prior to the May 15, 2000 U.S. filing date of Tsujimura. A Rule 131 declaration from the inventors is attached hereto establishing the earlier invention by applicants. Since Tsujimura is not prior art under Section 102(e), the aforesaid Section 103(a) rejection should be withdrawn, as should the other Section 103(a) rejection relying on Tsujimura.

It is noted that the Examiner has raised US Patent No. 5,757,444 to Takemura in a related case (Our Ref. No. 925-197; 09/863,266), but not in this case. Thus, it is presumed that the Examiner realizes that Takemura is unrelated to the claimed invention herein (if the Examiner feels otherwise, it is requested that the Examiner cite and consider Takemura in this application).

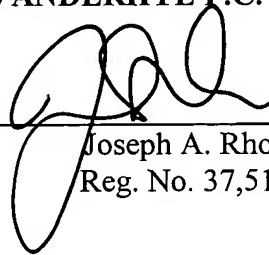
If any minor matter remains to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned with regard to the same.

IZUMI et al.
10/748,140
September 16, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rhoa', is written over a horizontal line.

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